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Accused Spy Sharon Scranage Released to Parents' Custody

Ghana Reportedly Acting Against Officials Involved in Case

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A former CIA clerk accused of disclosing secrets about U.S. spy operations in Ghana was released yesterday to her parents' custody, and the government of the West African country was reported moving against a number of high officials involved in the case.

The FBI has accused the former clerk, Sharon Marie Scranage, 29, of giving her former Ghanaian lover names of CIA employees and informants while she worked for the agency there. After a brief hearing in Alexandria yesterday afternoon, Scranage was allowed to return to her parents' home in rural King George, Va. The parents had placed their home as security for their daughter's \$25,000 bond.

Scranage was tearfully embraced by eight family members in the courtroom. She had been held in the D.C. Jail since Thursday.

"The only thing we can tell you is that we trust in God for everything," said Perry Scranage, the accused woman's older brother. "We feel her story will be told . . . We love Sharon and we're not going to forsake her, because we are her family . . . We have missed her so much. There's one thing in the United States they will not destroy, and that's the family."

The arrests of Scranage and her alleged companion from Ghana have led to the arrests of a number of high Ghanaian officials and to the flight of others, including members

of the nation's foreign ministry, according to press reports.

The Manchester Guardian reported from London yesterday that the government of Ghanaian leader Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings had frozen the assets of Commodore D.J. Oppong, the head of the country's navy, and Sam Okudeto, a prominent lawyer. Oppong has fled the country, the newspaper said.

The paper said that the disclosure that the CIA apparently had a large network of Ghanaians working for it could have repercussions far beyond past coup plots in Ghana and could threaten to disrupt CIA operations in other West African countries. It did not elaborate.

Scranage's lawyer, Brian Gettings, yesterday told U.S. Magistrate W. Harris Grimsley that Scranage waived her right to a preliminary hearing until the government's charges can be heard by a grand jury. Scranage was ordered by Grimsley to remain in eastern Virginia.

She is alleged to have passed classified CIA data to Michael Agbotui Soussoudis, whom prosecutors say is one of Rawlings' intelligence operatives. Soussoudis was arrested by the FBI July 10 at the Springfield Holiday Inn when he appeared for a meeting with Scranage.

Soussoudis, 39, has been charged with espionage and is being held in the D.C. Jail. He is to appear in Alexandria for a hearing in the case.

Soussoudis, who said in court July 11 that he was "just a relative" of Rawlings, has denied being a

Ghanaian intelligence officer. Soussoudis and Scranage dated while Scranage worked with the CIA in Ghana, according to U.S. government sources. Scranage left her job there to return home last May. The sources have said that CIA officials became suspicious of her activities during a routine polygraph test given to agency employees returning from overseas.

According to the FBI affidavits, Scranage allegedly met in Ghana with members of that country's intelligence agency. Government sources have said that one of the persons she met with is Tojo Tsikata, head of Ghanaian intelligence.

Tsikata, considered to be one of the most pro-Soviet members of the Rawlings government, frequently has accused the CIA of attempting to overthrow Rawlings, most recently in 1983. Tsikata has close ties to security agents of Libya, Bulgaria and East Germany, according to several academic and Ghanaian opposition sources.

The Guardian said that, as recently as two months ago, reputed CIA agents have been asked to leave the U.S. Embassy in Accra, the capital of Ghana. A senior agent left hurriedly in May, an incident that the newspaper said may have been related to Scranage's arrest.

Scranage, who worked for the CIA for seven years, was questioned by FBI agents for three days before her arrest July 11, and much of the information contained in the FBI affidavits comes from those interviews.